



EMERGENCY ORDER

IN AND FOR THE CITY OF SEQUIM, WASHINGTON

No. 2020-36

Regarding establishment of the City of Sequim's "Childcare Stipend Program" that authorizes a fund to cover temporary taxable payments to eligible City employees who need to provide for unusual or expanded daily supervision of their children as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Policy/Budget ☒ (Council)

City Clerk use only: Presented to Council _____

Administrative (City Manager) ☐

On March 16, 2020, at a special meeting of the City Council of the City of Sequim, the City Council issued a Proclamation of Civil Emergency due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak that had been identified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020. The Proclamation was issued pursuant to Sequim Municipal Code 2.60, RCW 35A.38.010, and RCW 38.52.070(2) based on the public health threat posed by COVID-19, and is consistent with concurrent emergency declarations issued by the President of the United States and the Governor of the State of Washington.

Subsequent to Governor Inslee's issuance of "Stay Home Stay Healthy" and "Safe Start" Proclamations, Washington State and local governments like the City of Sequim have issued a series of orders and guidelines aimed at controlling the spread of the disease and establishing programs to ameliorate the pandemic's impact on the public. The City has also issued orders related to employee leave, staff levels, and work schedules.

A major disruption caused by the COVID-19 crisis is the closure of schools and daycare centers. Minor children who would usually be supervised outside the home for many hours of the day are instead forced to remain at home, and if their parents are essential workers or otherwise required to work elsewhere, alternate supervision arrangements must be found and paid for. Several City of Sequim employees are essential workers and/or unable to work from home and simultaneously supervise their children.

The City Manager and Human Resources Department of the City of Sequim have determined that a fund should be established to assist eligible City employees with the excess costs of childcare caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. The "Childcare Stipend Program" provides small per-child, per-workday payments to employees facing difficulties, with the understanding that the stipend amounts are taxable, the program is temporary, and the employee must regularly document continuing need and immediately report any change in circumstances.

Because this Emergency Order has policy and budget ramifications, it is being brought before Council for ratification.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY DIRECTED AND ORDERED THAT:



Section 1. Establishment of Fund for Childcare Stipend Program. The City Administrative Services Department will establish a fund of up to \$18,000 per semester, or up to \$1,000 per week for the duration of the Program, from which childcare stipend payments will be made to eligible employees. The stipend payments will be limited to \$10 per child, per weekday, up to a total of \$50 per week. (This amount has been calculated based on the dues for membership at the Olympic Peninsula Boys & Girls Club, which is one potential resource for alternative supervision.) The Childcare Stipend Program is temporary, and may be terminated at the discretion of the City Manager even if the COVID-19 crisis remains an ongoing issue for parents. The Program will terminate when public schools or the employee's original daycare reopens for in-person attendance, and in cases where the school or daycare reopens with alternating virtual and in-person days, the City will only pay the Stipend for the virtual days. In addition, the Stipend may not be used to pay family members of the employee who live in the employee's household and were providing child supervision without reimbursement prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. This Program's funding source and amount may be adjusted administratively, as well as the forms and procedures, without returning to Council for approval.

Section 2. Administration of Childcare Stipend Program. The City's Human Resources Department and Payroll Office will jointly administer the Childcare Stipend Program by verifying eligibility of applicants, processing paperwork along with timesheets, and accounting for stipend amounts distributed.

Section 3. Presentation, Ratification, Termination. Emergency Orders issued under the March 16, 2020 Proclamation of Civil Emergency will be filed with the Legal Department and presented by the City Clerk as soon as practicable to the City Council for ratification and confirmation, modification, or rejection, if applicable.

Rejected orders will be void after the Council vote rejecting them.

Until such time as Council acts, Emergency Orders will be considered in full force and effect.

Section 4. Duration. Unless modified, extended, or terminated by the Sequim City Council or Sequim City Manager as applicable, this Emergency Order is effective immediately and remains in effect until the temporary Childcare Stipend Program is terminated.

SIGNED this 22nd day of September, 2020, at 10:02 hours.

CITY OF SEQUIM

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Charles P. Bush".

Charles P. Bush, City Manager

Approved as to form:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kristina Nelson-Gross".

Kristina Nelson-Gross, City Attorney

Attest:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sara McMillon".

Sara McMillon, City Clerk



152 W. Cedar St., Sequim, WA 98382
(360) 683-4139 www.sequimwa.gov

CHILDCARE STIPEND APPLICATION – COVID-19

The City of Sequim has established a temporary **Childcare Stipend Program** to assist City employees who need to provide for unusual or expanded daily supervision of their children as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. *This Childcare Stipend is only available to cover the COVID-19-related childcare needs of children for whom the employee is the custodial parent or legal guardian.*

If your child's regular school/daycare closed on or around March 16, 2020 and continues to be unavailable for in-person attendance, you are welcome to apply for the Childcare Stipend. Children participating in virtual school who would otherwise be unsupervised are also eligible.

Employees may receive up to \$10 per weekday (up to \$50 per week) per child (which is the cost of Boys & Girls Club attendance). Please note these are considered taxable funds and will be included in your total annual earnings for tax purposes.

The Childcare Stipend Program will terminate if public school or the employee's existing daycare reopens for in-person attendance *even if the family chooses to continue with other arrangements*. If the public school or daycare opens with a hybrid plan alternating virtual and in-person attendance, the Stipend will only be paid for virtual days.

The Childcare Stipend will not be paid to family members of the employee residing in employee's household who were already providing supervision for children *without reimbursement* prior to the pandemic (e.g., siblings, grandparents).

To qualify for a Childcare Stipend, complete this application and submit it to the Human Resources Department with documentation of your childcare expenses (registration form, receipt, etc.) You will then be required to submit *with each payroll period timesheet* a "Childcare Stipend Verification" form listing each day your child was in paid care for the duration of your participation in the Childcare Stipend Program.

Section 1 – Employee Information

Employee Name:

Phone Number:

Employee Regular Hours Per Workweek:

Section 2 – Impact of COVID-19 Emergency

1. How has your childcare situation changed since the Statewide “Stay Home – Stay Healthy” Proclamation and other pandemic-related Emergency Orders went into effect? (e.g., school closed, daycare closed, etc.)

2. How do you plan to use the Childcare Stipend to assist with your circumstances (e.g., hiring babysitter/nanny, paying dues to Boys & Girls Club, etc.)?

Section 3 – Total Eligible Children (minors for whom you have legal custody)

1. Birth-Age 5:

2. Ages 5.5-12:

3. Ages 13-18: (In the space below, please explain why your teenager is unable to stay home alone)

STATEMENT UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY: Under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington, the undersigned City employee states as follows: I understand the questions in this application and declare that all of the answers and information I have provided are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief. I acknowledge and agree that any false statement, including omission of information, subjects me to potential administrative, civil, and/or criminal penalties. **IF I AM GRANTED A CHILDCARE STIPEND I WILL NOTIFY HR AND THE PAYROLL OFFICE IMMEDIATELY OF ANY CHANGE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES I HAVE DESCRIBED HEREIN.** I understand that if I receive Childcare Stipend funds after I become ineligible for them, I will be required to repay the City for all monies received in error.

Signature: Date: City and State Where Signed:

OFFICE USE ONLY Below This Line

Verification Procedures Undertaken:

Total Number of Children Approved: _____

Total Amount of Stipend Available to This Family Per Workweek: \$ _____
(actual amount paid will be determined by each payroll period's timesheet)

Review Performed by (print): _____

Date: _____

Application approved? Yes ☐ No ☐ Reason: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



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CHILDCARE STIPEND VERIFICATION – COVID-19
(Attach to Timesheet)

The City of Sequim established a temporary **Childcare Stipend Program** to assist City Employees who need to provide for unusual or expanded daily supervision of their minor children as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The undersigned employee was previously approved to receive the Childcare Stipend due to the reason(s) set forth in the "Office Use Only" box on the Childcare Stipend Application. This Verification form must be completed and attached to the timesheet for every payroll period in which the employee receives the stipend. **Employee: Please remember that these funds are taxable and will be included in your total annual earnings for tax purposes.**

Section 1 – Employee Information

Employee Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Section 2 – Childcare Allowance

1. Payroll Period: From _____ To _____

2. Total Number of Children Approved for Reimbursement: _____

3. Number of Days Paid for Care Due to COVID Outbreak: _____

4. Total Amount of Stipend Requested for Payroll Period: \$ _____

STATEMENT UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY: Under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington, the undersigned City employee states as follows: I declare that all of the information I have provided in my timesheet and this Childcare Stipend Verification are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief. I acknowledge and agree that any false statement, including omission of information, subjects me to potential administrative, civil, and/or criminal penalties. **I WILL NOTIFY HR AND THE PAYROLL OFFICE IMMEDIATELY OF ANY CHANGE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES I HAVE DESCRIBED IN MY CHILDCARE STIPEND APPLICATION.** I understand that if I receive any Childcare Stipend funds after I become ineligible for them, I will be required to repay the City for all monies received in error.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

City and State Where Signed: _____, _____

OFFICE USE ONLY Below This Line

Amount Approved for this Payroll Period: \$ _____

Amount is Different from Employee's Request Due to: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title: _____

Employees who disagree with the Stipend amount approved for this payroll period may contact HR.